

1 Claims

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3 1. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, comprising the
4 steps of:

5 (a) composing an optically readable indicia;

6 (b) applying said optically readable indicia to an object;

7 (c) optically scanning said indicia to generate an electronic representation
8 of said indicia;

9 (d) storing said electronic representation of said indicia, said storing being
10 done by a device used to perform said optical scanning;

11 (e) downloading said electronic representation of said indicia to a
12 computing device;

13 (f) causing said computing device to communicate a signal to a central
14 server, said signal including information to identify said optically readable
15 indicia;

16 (g) programming said central server to associate said optically readable
17 indicia with a plurality of addresses in response to selected criteria, whereby said
18 optically readable indicia is associated with different addresses in response to
19 differences in said selected criteria;

20 (h) said central server being responsive to said signal i) to contact a server
21 at an address associated with said signal and said optically readable indicia, and
22 ii) obtain information from said server associated with said address and
23 communicate said information received from said server associated with said
24 address to said computing device for display or other use at said computing
25 device.

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27 2. A method as in claim 1, wherein said central server is responsive, to said
28 signal to contact said server at an address associated with said signal and said

1 optically readable indicia, and to the number of times of said contacting of said
2 server.

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4 3. A method as in claim 1, wherein said criteria comprises differences in location
5 of said printed indicia, whereby said optically readable indicia is associated in
6 response to differences in the location of said printed indicia with different
7 addresses.

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9 4. A method as in claim 1, wherein said criteria comprises differences in location
10 of consumer, whereby said optically readable indicia is associated in response to
11 differences in the consumer's location with different addresses.

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13 5. A method as in claim 1, wherein said composing an optically readable indicia
14 comprises;

15 (a) creating a database record on a central server by a database record
16 owner;

17 (b) providing database fields to associate said database record with a
18 network address;

19 (c) populating certain of said database fields with data supplied by said
20 database record owner;

21 (d) populating certain of said database fields with data supplied said
22 central server; and

23 (e) printing said optically readable indicia.

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25 6. A method as in claim 5, wherein said printing comprises downloading an
26 electronic representation of said optically readable indicia to said database
27 record owner.

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- 1 7. A method as in claim 5, wherein said printing comprises printing of said
2 optically readable indicia by said central server.
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- 4 8. A method as in claim 1, wherein said criteria comprises differences in time,
5 whereby said optically readable indicia is associated in response to differences in
6 time with different addresses over time.
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- 8 9. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, comprising the
9 steps of:
10 (a) composing an optically readable indicia containing information
11 respecting a plurality of different elements;
12 (b) applying said optically readable indicia to an object;
13 (c) using a scanning device to optically scan said indicia and generate an
14 electronic representation of said indicia;
15 (d) storing said electronic representation of said indicia, said storing being
16 done by said device used to perform said optical scanning;
17 (e) downloading said electronic representation of said indicia to a
18 computing device;
19 (f) causing said computing device to communicate a signal to a central
20 server, said signal including information to identify said optically readable
21 indicia;
22 (g) programming said central server to associate said optically readable
23 indicia with a plurality of addresses in response to selected criteria selected from
24 said information respecting a plurality of different elements, whereby said
25 optically readable indicia is associated with different addresses in response to
26 differences in said selected criteria;
27 (h) said central server being responsive to said signal
28 i) to contact a server at an address associated with said signal and

1 said optically readable indicia at the time of said contacting of said server, and
 2 ii) obtain information from said server associated with said address
 3 and communicate said information received from said server associated with
 4 said address to said computing device for display or other use at said computing
 5 device.

6 10. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 9,
 7 wherein a consumer specific record is generated in response to the
 8 communication of said signal to said central server.

9 11. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 10,
 10 wherein said consumer specific record contains information identifying such
 11 consumer.

12 12. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 11,
 13 wherein said information identifying such consumer is identification data
 14 contained on the hard drive of said computing device.

15 13. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 9,
 16 wherein said indicia is a bar-code.

17 14. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 9,
 18 wherein said communication causes the downloading of information responsive
 19 to particular consumer attributes and/or information and coded with an set
 20 signal, and/or a direct site address.

21 15. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 9,
 22 wherein said communication results in transfer of the inquiry to a site unrelated
 23 to a site associated with the optically readable indicia scanned by the consumer.

24 16. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 15,
 25 wherein said transfer to said unrelated site is accompanied by an explanation to
 26 the consumer.

27 17. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 15,
 28 wherein said transfer to said unrelated site is accompanied by a payment to an

1 individual associated with the composing of said optically readable indicia.

2 18. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, comprising
3 the steps of:

4 (a) composing an indicia containing information respecting a plurality of
5 different elements;

6 (b) incorporating said indicia into an audiovisual production;

7 (c) using a device capable of detecting said indicia to generate an
8 electronic representation of said indicia;

9 (d) storing said electronic representation of said indicia, said storing being
10 done by said device used to perform said optical scanning;

11 (e) downloading said electronic representation of said indicia to a
12 computing device;

13 (f) causing said computing device to communicate a signal to a central
14 server, said signal including information to identify said indicia;

15 (g) said central server being responsive to said signal

16 i) to contact a server at an address associated with said signal and
17 said indicia, and

18 ii) obtain information from said server associated with said address
19 and communicate said information received from said server associated with
20 said address to said computing device for display or other use at said computing
21 device.

22 19. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
23 wherein a plurality of addresses are associated with said signal and said server is
24 contacted and produces address information in response to selected criteria, said
25 criteria being selected from said information respecting a plurality of different
26 elements, whereby said indicia is associated with different addresses in response
27 to differences in said selected criteria.

28 20. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,

- 1 wherein said indicia is an audio cue.
- 2 21. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 3 wherein said indicia is a pattern displayed on the cathode ray tube of a television
- 4 screen.
- 5 22. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 6 wherein said indicia is a series of flashes of various duration produced by the
- 7 cathode ray tube of a television set.
- 8 23. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 9 wherein said indicia comprises a sequence of tones having different frequencies.
- 10 24. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 11 wherein said indicia comprises a number of tones of different frequencies output
- 12 by said audio device simultaneously.
- 13 25. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 14 wherein said indicia comprises a sequence of tones having different frequencies,
- 15 and additional tones output during the output of said sequence at frequencies
- 16 different from the tones of said sequence.
- 17 26. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 18 wherein said indicia are transmitted periodically during the course of an
- 19 audiovisual program that correspond to content related to the substance of said
- 20 program.
- 21 27. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 22 wherein said indicia are transmitted periodically during the course of an
- 23 audiovisual program and have a content that correspond to the particular
- 24 portion of the program approximately during which they are transmitted.
- 25 28. A method according to claim 1 wherein the optically readable indicia
- 26 comprise invisible ink barcoding or digital watermarking.
- 27 29. A method according to claim 1 wherein the indicia are readable by a
- 28 magnetic or other non-optical device.